



Categories And Keywords

Metadata is the quiet engine behind your book’s discoverability. It’s the information that tells online stores what your book *is*, who it’s *for*, and where it should *appear*. Good metadata helps the right readers find you. Poor metadata hides your book in the wrong corners of the store. The Categories and Keywords you select drive the Metadata.

You don’t need to be an expert, just intentional.

A Quick Prompt to Get You Started

Ask yourself: *If a reader didn’t know my name, how would they search for a book like mine?*

Your categories and keywords should answer that question.

Categories

Categories tell retailers which shelf your book belongs on. They shape who sees your book, what it’s compared to, and which bestseller lists it can appear on.

What to Aim For

- Accuracy – choose categories that genuinely match your book
- Specificity – narrower categories often give better visibility
- Reader expectations – categories signal tone and genre

Examples

- “Fantasy” is broad.
- “Epic Fantasy” or “Urban Fantasy” is clearer.
- “Fantasy → Coming of Age” is even more targeted.

Things to Remember

- You can usually choose **two** main categories.
- Some platforms allow you to request additional “hidden” categories.
- Categories influence your competition, choose wisely.

Keywords

Keywords are search terms that help readers find your book when browsing or typing into a search bar. Think of them as the phrases that describe your book's themes, tone, or audience.

What Good Keywords Look Like

- Phrases, not single words
(“found family fantasy” is better than “fantasy”)
- Reader-focused
What would *they* type, not what you would call it.
- Accurate and honest
Misleading keywords frustrate readers and hurt sales.

Examples

- “slow-burn romance”
- “cosy mystery village setting”
- “post-apocalyptic survival”
- “productivity for beginners”

What to Avoid

- competitor author names
- irrelevant trends
- stuffing keywords that don't match the book

How Categories and Keywords Work Together

Categories place your book on the right shelf.

Keywords help readers find that shelf.

When both are aligned, your book becomes discoverable to the people most likely to enjoy it.

A Simple Exercise

Write two lists:

1. Books similar to yours
2. Search terms a reader might use to find them

Your categories will come from list one. Your keywords will come from list two.

A Final Thought

Metadata isn't marketing. It's clarity. When you describe your book accurately and confidently, the right readers will find it, and that's the whole point.